

**LOGAN COUNTY
MASTER PLAN
Executive Summary**

What should Logan County, Colorado be like in the year 2018?

The Master Plan envisions a future with economic growth and development that contributes to a high quality of life for all residents in Logan County, Colorado. It is a future in which Logan County retains the integrity of its environment and capitalizes on its wealth of natural, built and human resources'. Collectively, the following major planning concepts define this vision for the future -- a future on which the goals of the Plan's elements are based. This vision, created through the Logan County Planning Commission will be reflected in the draft Master Plan. The authority for such a Master Plan is found in C.R.S. 30-28-106. Each County in Colorado shall adopt a Master Plan within two (2) years after January 8, 2002 that meets the guidelines as established in C.R.S. 30-28-106.

- **Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal.** Logan County should strive to create a supportive climate for business in its governmental operations and reach its full economic potential without sacrificing the character of its community and resources that attract this growth.
- **Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning County-wide with Consistency of Implementing Resolution, Regulation and Development Approvals.** Regardless of how well each plans independently, neither the County, its incorporated city and towns, unincorporated communities, federal and state agencies, nor the myriad of other regional and quasi-public agencies will effectively shape the future until each entity receives the cooperation of the others and all move toward common goals. The County's Master Plan is a statement of its goals for coordinated planning and action.
- **Promote the Growth of the County's Urban Areas.** Logan County will continue to focus its efforts toward making urban areas more attractive for growth, not only to protect and maintain the enormous investment in public services that has already been made in these areas, but also to help relieve the pressures of growth on environmental and fiscal resources in suburban and rural areas.
- **Provide Adequate Public Services at a Reasonable Cost.** Logan County should time and sequence the provisions of public services with growth so that the levels of service for roads, streets, rural water systems and sewage systems and other facilities are maintained as the County continues to grow.
- **Promote Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost.** Logan County needs to focus on real housing costs, which include not only principal and interest on the mortgage, but also future commuting costs, taxes, utility rates, insurance premiums, environmental costs, and other "hidden" costs of housing.
- **Protect the Environment.** Logan County must recognize the enormous economic value of its environment - the unspoiled beauty of the County that maintains its agricultural identity and attracts new growth while sustaining the communities. The County should encourage the

growth of the City of Sterling, the Towns of Crook, Fleming, Iliff, Merino and Peetz and the smaller outlying unincorporated communities that maintain the health of its citizens and integrity of its valuable environmental features.

- **Conserve the County's Natural Resources.** Logan County should protect wetlands, floodplain areas, washes, aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes, areas of unique flora and fauna, and areas with scenic, historic, cultural and recreational value, and capitalize on these resources for the long-term benefit of all residents.
- **Preserve and Enhance Historic, Cultural, Open Space and Recreational Lands and Structures.** Logan County should ensure that the built environment incorporates natural and historic treasures, recreation and tourism into the everyday lives of residents.

What is the Master Plan and how does it help achieve this vision?

Logan County's Master Plan is a guide for public and private decision-makers. It lists the County's goals for its future, establishes specific policies for achieving those goals, and recommends measures for implementing County policy. The Master Plan is not a detailed zoning map or an engineering drawing. It addresses a broad range of important public policy issues in a comprehensive fashion. The goals and policies of the Plan provide a framework for elected and appointed officials to make decisions affecting land use, housing, economic development, public infrastructure, public services, recreational and tourism and natural resources. Private decision makers also benefit from the Plan, because it identifies County policies and priorities, thereby making public development and investment decisions more predictable.

What does the Master Plan contain?

Typically the Master Plan is organized into ten major sections.

- Section I introduces the plan;
- Section II lists major planning concepts;
- Section III establishes a context for Planning;
- Section IV describes the planning process;
- Section V addresses natural resources issues;
- Section VI establishes land use patterns and policies to shape future community development;
- Section VII addresses public infrastructure, facility and service issues;
- Section VIII establishes goals and policies for specific area plans;
- Section IX describes key implementation tools; and
- Section X defines key terms and lists background reports.

Sections V - VII include the seven Master Plan Elements that establish goals and policies relating to natural resources, land use, housing, economic development, public infrastructure and public facilities, and recreation and tourism. These Elements are the County's statement of policy to achieve the desired vision of the future.

The goals, policies and implementation measures in the Master Plan Elements are the essence of the document. Goals describe a desired state of affairs for the future. They are broad public purposes toward which the policies and implementation measures are directed. Policies are statements of County intent against which individual actions and decisions are evaluated. The wording of the policies conveys the intended level of commitment action. Policies that use the word **shall** are mandatory directives, while those using the word **should** are statements to be followed unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise. Implementation measures are actions recommended to carry out the policies. They aren't the only possible actions that would achieve these goals. They are intended to set an initial agenda for implementation of the Plan.

What are the key policies of a Master Plan?

Seven Plan Elements contain the goals and policies of a Master Plan. They are: Natural Resources, Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Public Infrastructure, Public Facilities, and Recreation and Tourism.

The goals, policies and implementation measures of the Natural Resources Element address the County's role in protecting the quality of the natural environment. Logan County has a wealth of resources, and through sensible use of those resources, the County can help conserve its air, water, scenic and other valuable resources for enjoyment of future generations. The element emphasizes the importance of:

- Supporting efforts to maintain or improve water quality;
- Protecting the quality of our air;
- Encouraging energy conservation;
- Cooperating with Federal and State agencies in environmental studies and actions, such as those addressing floodplain areas and our river corridor; and
- Protecting hillsides and other scenic resources.

The **Land Use Element** defines goals and policies for the physical development of the County. Many of the policies, such as promoting infill while providing for market flexibility, are illustrated by a Land Use Diagram. The Land Use diagram maps the type and intensity of uses that may be permitted throughout the incorporated portions of the County as well as adjacent potential areas for annexation by the City of Sterling or the Towns of Crook, Fleming, Iliff, Merino and Peetz. It provides more than enough land to accommodate anticipated population growth. There are outlying unincorporated communities that will be identified as suburban in their development. These outlying communities will have their own overlay zone that will later be defined as an Area Plan that will meet the desires of its individual citizenry.

The Land Use Diagram assigns general land use types (residential, commercial, open space, public purpose and industrial) to all unincorporated lands. Major areas of new suburban/urban development are projected to be located around the City of Sterling.

In addition to adopting a land use diagram and appropriate policies for its use and interpretation, this Element establishes policies that:

- Apply different policies to rural areas than to suburban or urban;
- Provide for "Non-Conforming" existing and approved development;

- Promote land use compatibility;
- Provide a consistent policy for reviewing individual development applications; and
- Establish policies for amending the Master Plan.

The **Housing Element** addresses the need for residents to have safe, affordable housing. The Plan does not envision direct County subsidy of housing. It focuses on County actions that promote the construction of a variety of housing types, affordable for residents of all socio-economic groups. The Plan will address all aspects of housing affordability, including the initial cost and “hidden” costs such as transportation and utilities.

The **Economic Development Element** promotes a more diverse, stable economy that expands residents’ employment opportunities. The Element would emphasize the need for continuation of the cooperative approach to promote appropriate economic growth in the Community.

The **Public Facilities Element** defines the County’s goals and policies relating to parks, fire protection, public safety and other services and facilities. The Element emphasizes the benefits of a cooperative approach to service providers -- one that takes advantage of the cost savings from joint service provision and shared facilities.

The **Recreational and Tourism Element** shall indicate how Logan County intends to provide for the recreational and tourism needs of residents of the county and visitors through delineated areas dedicated to, without limitation, hiking, mountain biking, climbing, rafting, fishing, boating, hunting and shooting, or any other form of sports or other recreational activity, as applicable, and commercial facilities supporting such uses.

How should the Plan be used?

The Master Plan is a guide to action. It is not itself an implementation tool. By ensuring that individual County actions are consistent with the policies of this Master Plan, the County can effectively achieve its goals. For example, the Governing Body, the Board of County Commissioners will use the Plan’s policies and Land Use Diagram to decide whether to approve a proposed rezoning. Zoning, subdivision, building and construction codes and standards will continue to regulate development in the appropriate areas. Some amendments to these regulations will be necessary, however, to more effectively carry out the Plan. The Master Plan defines policies and recommends measures governing the application, modification and interpretation of these development regulations.

The Master Plan should be used as the basis for preparing future updates of the facility master plans for the County’s flood control and transportation systems. The policies of the Plan also should guide the preparation and update of capital improvement programs, the County’s annual budget and specific area plans.

The Master Plan should be a dynamic document, subject to periodic change when conditions within the County change significantly. Periodic review and amendment of the Plan will be required to meet statutory requirements and to assure it addresses the needs of County businesses and residents.